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Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

4041st Meeting

Friday, 3 September 1999, 9 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. van Walsum	(Netherlands)
Members:	Argentina	Ms. Moglia
	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Cordeiro
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghé
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Zbogar
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

The situation in East Timor

99-85738 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 9 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in East Timor

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Indonesia and Portugal in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia) and Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) took seats at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: On 5 May 1999, Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations concluded a historic set of Agreements intended to resolve the long-standing issue of East Timor. These 5 May Agreements requested me to determine, through a popular consultation based on a universal, direct and secret ballot, whether the East Timorese people would accept or reject a proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

To enable me to fulfil this request, the Security Council established on 11 June 1999 the United Nations Mission in East Timor, which proceeded to organize and conduct the popular consultation. It registered 451,792 voters in East Timor and around the world, in a registration process which the Electoral Commission, a body composed of three independent commissioners, deemed to be a sound basis for the conduct of the consultation.

Thus, on 30 August 1999, in a show of courage and determination, the people of East Timor turned out in massive numbers to vote in the popular consultation, expressing their will as to the future of the Territory. The votes cast have now been counted, and the Electoral Commission has assessed all outstanding complaints and certified the results of the popular consultation process. Therefore, in fulfilment of the task entrusted to me by the 5 May Agreements, I hereby announce the result of the vote.

The result of the vote is 94,388, or 21.5 per cent, in favour and 344,580, or 78.5 per cent, against the proposal for special autonomy. The people of East Timor have thus rejected the proposed special autonomy and expressed their wish to begin a process of transition towards independence.

After 24 years of conflict, East Timor now stands at the threshold of what we all hope will be a process orderly and peaceful transition towards independence. The coming days, however, will require patience and calm from the people of East Timor. I hardly need stress how important it is for its leaders to exercise wisdom and reason. Now is the time for all concerned to seize the opportunity to lay a firm and lasting foundation for cooperation and peace and to usher in an era of stability and prosperity for all future generations of East Timorese.

Those who voted to accept the proposed special autonomy must not consider this outcome a loss. Nor indeed should the majority consider it a victory, for there are no winners and no losers today. Rather, this moment heralds the opportunity for all East Timorese to begin to forge together a common future in what is to become an independent East Timor.

Today I ask all the parties to bring to an end the violence that for 24 years has caused untold suffering to East Timor. I ask them to begin in earnest a process of dialogue and reconciliation through the East Timor Consultative Commission. I call upon the Government of Indonesia, which made possible the consultation process through a statesmanlike initiative of the President of the Republic, to ensure its successful culmination by carrying out its responsibility to maintain law and order in the Territory.

I should like to thank both Indonesia and Portugal for their commitment and perseverance in this process. I am confident that the Governments will fulfil their

remaining obligations under the 5 May Agreements. Let me assure both Governments that the United Nations will continue to work with them to ensure the implementation of the results of the consultation through a peaceful and orderly process.

Let me also assure the people of East Timor that the United Nations will not fail them in guiding East Timor in its transition towards independence.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.10 p.m.